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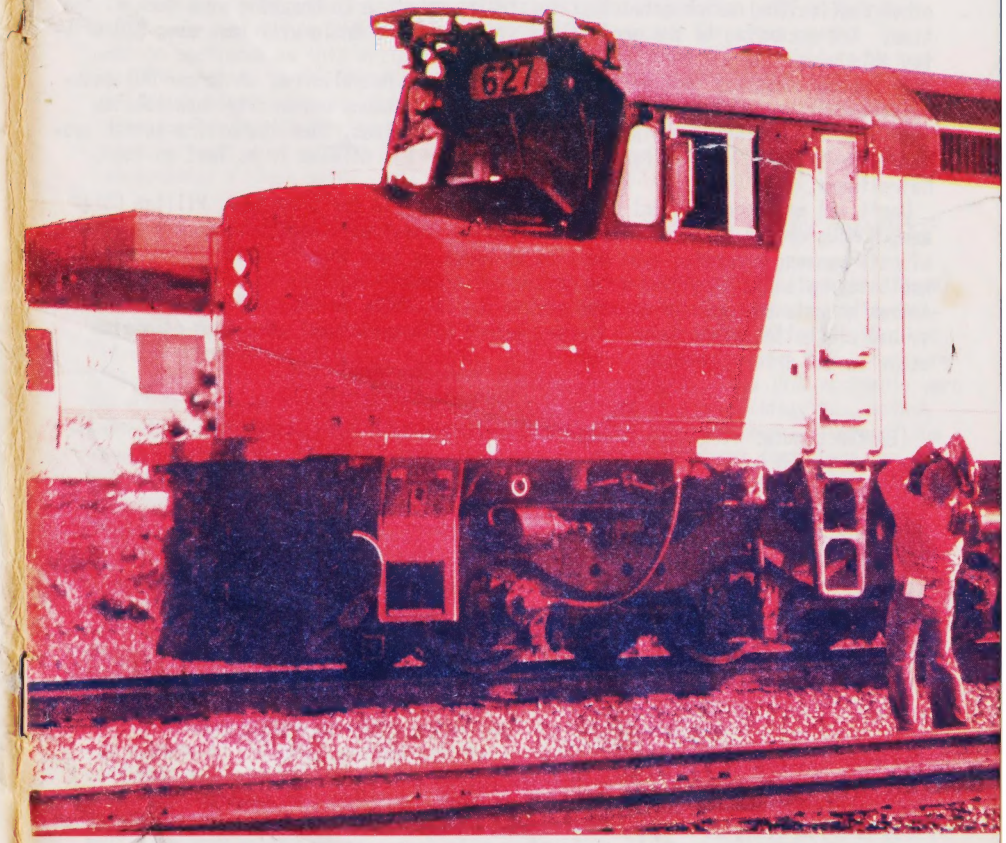
RAIL TRAVEL NEWS

VOL. 6 NO. 22
SECOND ISSUE OF
DECEMBER 1976

#144



- AMTRAK'S NEXT FIVE YEARS
- THE TRAIN OF THE YEAR
- RIDING THE SUNSET LIMITED

ON THE COVER: The scene described last issue at the groundbreaking ceremony for the new Richmond CA rail-bus-BART station on Dec 16. The eastbound SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR stops for the benefit of TV cameramen at the site of the forthcoming station. In the background is a BART train and a portion of the BART station which will be linked with the eastbound track by an overhead walkway. Photo by RTN.

LETTERS

I hope your reprint of Amtrak's projected profit/loss statement for Fiscal Year 1976 (last issue) opens the eyes among your readers who advocate "expanded rail service at any price." For altho I have taken that same position since Amtrak's inception, I am now starting to have second thoughts.

Either Amtrak's costs have recently gone straight thru the roof, or the rail-oriented media have failed to alert readers to the alarming trend of deficits. I'm sure it wasn't too long ago that I read an article on the SOUTHWEST LIMITED (in another publication) which noted that the train was close to breaking even much of the time. Yet according to the profit/loss statement, the train will lose over $20 million this year.

As another example, look at Amtrak's premium-fare Metroliners. A former DOT economist who now teaches transportation policy at an Eastern university once told me that when the Metroliners start chalking up a large loss, then the entire Amtrak system is in trouble. And Amtrak projects more than $13 million to be lost on the Metroliners.

Don't get me wrong: I'm not trying to be a spokesman for Greyhound, William Coleman, NAMBO, or any of those others. But if we individuals dedicated to the revival of rail passenger service ever hope to be known as more than "railfans," then we had better plan on expending as much jaw-boning and brainstorming on ways to curb Amtrak's costs as we do on ways to revive the DEL MONTE or CALIFORNIA ZEPHYR. And we had all better start doing it soon, before a Congressional oversight committee steps in and tries its hand.

Jeffrey Aberbach
Burbank, California

(Editor's note: It's good to have a corporation lean and efficient, but the problem here is not so much high deficits as it is one of educating the public about the way numbers can be juggled in accounting statements. Amtrak's 1976 statement shows that revenues cover 40% of costs. Amtrak's 5-year projections are that by 1981 41% will be so covered, with an average of 38.5% coverage over the years till then. This is pretty efficient, if you compare it with the estimated 33% of the airlines. Amtrak is in a weak position because it is so set up that it must expose these numbers to public scrutiny, a fact that is not true of any other transportation mode. And in the "private sector," the private automobile owner doesn't pay all the costs of his auto travel by a long shot. Every wage earner pays a big part of them unwillingly in taxes or in other forms such as inflated costs of goods (for example, in higher food prices as crops are damaged by auto-produced air pollution), whether or not he owns an automobile. This figure-juggling is a pseudo-problem. The real nitty-gritty problems facing society are How are we going to rebuild our rail system fast enough to forestall immobility when petroleum runs out, and How will we design an airplane that runs on no fuel, and How do we keep the automobile from proliferating at an exponential rate, and How do we keep our economy on an even keel during the wrenching changes that seem to be necessary in our transportation system?)

Rail Travel News, Vol. 6, No. 22 (Whole No. 144). Second Issue of December, 1976.
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Published twice monthly by Message Media, P. O. Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709. Subscription $9.00 per year; single copy 40¢.
STAFF: Editor: James Russell. Editor-at-Large: Paul Rayton. Regional Correspondents: Peter Putnam Bretz, Los Angeles; Jack Ferry, Chicago; Kenneth Maylath, Baltimore; Peter Roehm, Boston. Happy New Year to you from everyone here!

BN DECREE DISRUPTS AMTRAK HOLIDAY TRAVEL

In a decision that shocked and puzzled railroad observers, the Burlington Northern Railroad on Dec 19 informed Amtrak that it would no longer permit SDP40F locomotives on its lines unless they were restricted to a 40mph speed limit. It was speculated that the edict came about because of the Dec 16 derailment of the SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR (see also article on p. 15) on BN tracks near Omaha. A Seattle newspaper reported that Amtrak believes the alleged lateral sway of the GM-built engines was BN's source of concern. The SDP40F engine is the primary long-distance engine in Amtrak's roster. Coming just at the start of the heavy Christmas week, the edict left Amtrak unprepared, and for one day the federally-decreed thru train service between Seattle and Southern California was broken, as travelers were required to leave their COAST STARLIGHT accommodations at Portland and change to an Amfleet train for the BN section of the route. In following days, BN freight engines were used on long distance Amtrak trains on BN tracks, in conjunction with an Amtrak steam generator car or additional non-SDP40F Amtrak engine for steam power. The embargo continues as this article is written (Dec 29). The SFZ was said to be running P30 engines on the Chicago-Denver segment. Trains were initially delayed and passengers inconvenienced, but Amtrak said on Dec 29 that changing engines when entering or leaving BN territory was not delaying trains; however, breakdowns of steam generator cars were causing delays. Meanwhile, a rumor has reached RTN that the SP has demanded a 50mph speed limit on curves for the SDP40f locomotives.

PRESS QUESTIONS AMTRAK DERAILMENT FREQUENCY

In the wake of Amtrak's unfortunate 3-accident period of Dec 15-16 (see last issue), the Associated Press asked Amtrak to prepare information on the frequency of derailments of its trains. Amtrak replied that in the 30 days from Nov 19 to Dec 18 there had been 5 Amtrak derailments, compared to 2 in the same time span in 1975. Two were grade crossing accidents and 3 were still being investigated. The 1975 accidents were caused by a log on a track and a truck hitting a train at a grade crossing. Amtrak said there had been 25 derailments this year (thru Dec 21), the lowest figure of the past 5 years except for 1972, when there were 18, and pointed out that there are more trains running now than in 1972. Of the 25 1976 derailments, 11 were in the Midwest, 7 in the South, 3 in the Southwest, 2 in the East, and 2 in the Northwest. Judging by the past two years, January is the highest month for derailments, while May and August have the fewest. Amtrak has had only 12 passenger fatalities from derailments since it began operations, and 11 of those were in a single 1971 wreck, while the 12th happened in 1973.

Two more derailments were added to the 1976 list after this report was made. The Washington section of the BROADWAY LIMITED, train 441 westbound, derailed all 5 cars at 7:27pm on Dec 26 at Downingtown PA, a Philadelphia suburb. Since the wreck occurred on Amtrak-owned track, the corporation was able to make an immediate statement as to the cause: "The gauge of the track widened sufficiently in the vicinity of the heel joint of the frog at the west end of #73 crossover due to conditions of switch ties, to permit the lead wheel of the north side of the lead truck of car 2002 (the first car) to drop inside the rail." Thus a deteriorated cross tie was blamed. Amtrak said it had replaced 17 miles of ties and done other work on this Philadelphia-Harrisburg line since assuming ownership of it last May 19, and will replace 90 more miles of ties in 1977, plus other work. Amtrak has had only one other accident on the line--a grade crossing wreck on Feb 20, 1975. Amtrak said it is performing a higher level of maintenance than before it owned the track, and when it took it over there were no maintenance tools on the line. The BROADWAY section was pulled by GG1 engine 913, the weight of which widened the track. Damage to the 5 cars was as follows: car 2002 $5000, 5661 $40,000, 5648 $40,000, 5623 $80,000, 2293 $80,000. Three

(continued on page 13)

PENINSULA COMMUTER PLAN OFF TO LEGISLATURE

by Lowell Clucas

Over the strong objections of an unhappy SP management, the Bay Area's Metropolitan Transportation Commission has forwarded to the California State Legislature a transit plan that would keep the railroad in the commuter business on the San Francisco Peninsula, at least for the next 10 or 15 years. There was only one dissenting vote among the 18 MTC members when on Dec 15 they adopted the proposal of its project committee, Peninsula Transit Alternatives Project (PENTAP), for a major upgrade of Peninsula rail and bus service to be transmitted to Sacramento Jan 1.

PENTAP still has two major issues on its agenda: how the plan should be funded, and what manner of public agency should put it into effect and run it. PENTAP comes to grips with these problems in the next few weeks and will report its conclusions to MTC in late Jan or Feb. When MTC has completed action on the entire package, the future of the Peninsula Corridor will be in the hands of the state's lawmakers, who are expected to adopt the necessary enabling legislation in 1977.

The legislature will be considering PENTAP's "Alternative B," described in RTN's 1st Nov issue, the only one of several options that survived the project committee's year-long study. PENTAP rejected, for political and economic reasons, alternatives that extended BART to the San Francisco Airport. These options were left for future deliberation by the proposed transit agency and the Peninsula counties. To safeguard an eventual BART connection to the airport, PENTAP recommended (and the MTC approved) the retention in public hands of the short SP freight branch right-of-way from San Bruno at the western edge of the airport, to Daly City, now BART's southern terminus. The SP has petitioned the ICC for abandonment of the San Bruno-Daly City trackage.

The centerpiece of Alternative B, which also includes substantial improvements in Peninsula bus service, is the SP's existing 2-track, 47-mile main line between Fourth & Townsend in San Francisco and San Jose. A proposed extension by tunnel under First Street to the Transbay Terminal at First & Mission in S.F.'s Central Business District was narrowly defeated by a 5-4 PENTAP vote. But in presenting PENTAP's final plan to the full MTC, PENTAP chairman Jack Beckett said the more convenient Transbay Terminal location remained a future possibility. For the present, he said, capital costs were too high to be included in MTC's report to the legislature.

What is envisioned instead is a 4th & Townsend-Central Business District bus loop connecting with all trains, for which rolling stock would be provided by the Peninsula transit authority. Bus shuttles would also link nearby on-line stations to the San Francisco and San Jose airports.

Programmed in phases stretching from 1978 to 1985, the rail upgrade would begin in 1978 with station refurbishing and rehabilitation of the SP's 83-car fleet. The larger capital program gets underway in 1982 with the rehabilitation of 16 locomotives for push-pull operation and the modification of 46 existing bilevel cars as trailers with train line electric heating. Concurrently, the transit agency will add 16 bilevel coaches with cab controls and 24 trailers to the fleet, convert the present signal circuits to 2-way Centralized Traffic Control and make necessary modifications of switches and crossovers. The full upgrade would be in effect by the end of 1985.

The cost of the rail improvement package would be $49 million. Another $47 million would be invested in 170 new buses for the Corridor, improvements in the Bayshore Freeway (101) to facilitate bus movements on exclusive lanes, and construction of exclusive bus ramps from I-280 to the Transbay Terminal. I-280 now comes to a stub end alongside the old SP terminal building on 3rd St. in S.F., and eventually will hook up with the S.F.-Oakland Bay Bridge.

The total capital program for the rail/bus upgrade is projected at $105.5, including $9 million for better park/ride facilities, with the annual operating expense of the combined system forecast at $34 million by 1990. All figures are in 1976 dollars. With the much higher level of total commute service offered on the Peninsula, and greater emphasis on reverse commuting, the consultants working for PENTAP look for patronage of both modes by 1990 of 83,800 passengers a day--64,700 on rail and 19,100

(continued on page 21)

AS THE SUN RISES ON THE SUNSET

by Peter Bretz

Traveling by sleeper in the age of Amtrak does not necessarily mean first class; it simply means that you will be assigned space in a sleeping car. Anything else that does or doesn't come with it is up to time and circumstance. The whims of crew members (regardless of what Amtrak's Rules and Instruction Manual may state), variations in equipment, the phases of the moon or whatever, usually determine the quality of a particular train trip. Readers' comments in RTN's Train Rating Surveys range from excellent to very bad about the same train at the same time of year --merely different trips.

All of this may seem a negative way of introducing what was for me a thoroughly enjoyable ride. But the realities of the situation impress me: the small things that can make or break a trip.

This time my mission was aboard train 2, the SUNSET LIMITED. I boarded in Los Angeles as usual, rode overnight and most of the next day to Deming, New Mexico, and caught train 1 back to Los Angeles. A short turnaround enables one to try out two sets of equipment--one train just beginning a long trip, the other ending one.

My accommodations were sleeper class, and I checked in at the gate in the traditional manner. Since my ticket was of the new computer variety, I would have preferred to tender it aboard, if you please. Oh, well. Then, "TO TRAINS." And quite a crowd this Friday evening, December 10; not even the holiday rush yet. Coaches left, sleepers to the right, and up to trackside we go to check out that last car. Ah-ha! Sure enough, there was an ex-CALIFORNIA ZEPHYR dome-sleeper-observation-lounge sporting skirts on her side and three red lights on her rear. She was the 9251 "Silver Penthouse," my favorite. Of the CZ's original six, Amtrak owns four. Of the other two, the EL CAMINO train has one (see RTN, 2nd Nov issue), the RIO GRANDE ZEPHYR the other--both now without sleeping space or showers. (A check later revealed that the shower controls were still in the 9251, but the shower head was capped.)

Let's walk along the platform towards the head of the train. The next car up is the New York thru sleeper, 2600 "Pacific Bay" (10-6); then 2505 "Blue Mott" (10-3-2); 2365 "Regal Hill" (4-4-2); 2723 "Pine King" (10-6); diner 8031; dorm-lounge 3393; hi-level coaches 9906, 9959, 9947, 9942; baggage 1070; deadhead 8401 (ex-GN coach-diner); and engines 552 and 566.

Inside, the first coach is closed and dark, altho passengers are packing out the other three. Seems a coach attendant forgot to show up for work. Eventually the car is opened up, with three men working the four cars. These ex-Santa Fe hi-levels have always appeared comfortable even when full; let's hope the new bi-level coaches will be even more so when they start rolling. I walk downstairs and into the coach lounge. Good--it's open, even before departure time. Some people are already stocking up on soft drinks and sandwiches. I take my coffee and walk outside.

My roomette is #6 in "Blue Mott," but banging on the window produces that Lexan "clunk." Too bad, but I'm not riding for the scenery. As it happens, a man from Amtrak's Washington headquarters, whom I know, is occupying the roomette across the aisle from mine. Together, we stroll to the dome car to check things out. "Silver Penthouse" is designated line number 0240, first class lounge-sleeper. All space is occupied. The drawing room, incidentally, sells at bedroom rates during the winter season. The attendant is on duty here also, selling drinks. This car has been refurbished with a short swivel lounge seating throughout. Little tables are scattered here and there. Lounge seats and tables are also found up in the dome, an unexpected variation. A request is made to the attendant, and quickly the upstairs lights are turned off, to the audible pleasure of everyone.

My watch reads 9:33pm as we slowly glide out of the station. Liquid refreshment and easy conversation flow freely as the lights of Los Angeles give way to Pomona

and points East. The car rides well, and I'm pleased with the whole feeling of the train so far, especially the fact that both lounges were open right away. There have been nights when the train was an hour out of the station before the attendant had things ready.

It isn't long before I head to my Pullman-Standard 1947 sleeper and hit the plastic mattress, standing behind the zipped curtains to pull down the bed. Everything in the roomette works, but sleep comes with difficulty due to rough riding and rough track. We have orders to slow to 30mph around Indio because of high winds and blowing sand.

Next morning, outside Phoenix, a long freight has trouble sawing by us, causing a delay of over an hour. Finally, at 8:29, we roll into Phoenix, and we leave there at 8:43am. Going into the diner, I find a nice touch for Amtrak: a little card naming Mr. Ike Houston as the Steward and Mr. A. Harris as the waiter, plus the "Glad to have you with us" slogan. Mr. Harris is right here and asks if we want some morning coffee. The greatest! By the time Scottsdale and the Superstition Mountains are slipping past, the French toast and sausage have arrived. Food is above average, and the service is topnotch. I am very pleased with this, since my last trip on this train wasn't so good. Naturally, I left an appropriate tip.

I wander thru the coaches, noting that all four cars are well-filled and passengers look happy. Both lounge cars are doing a good business. The rear car certainly adds a lot to the train, and I spend a good deal of time there. We leave Tucson at 11:21, an hour and 41 minutes down. The little extra twists and turns of the track, the separation of the east- and westbound tracks, etc., all become more apparent and enjoyable from the dome-observation.

I'm relaxing in one of the rear-facing seats of the observation car when the announcement is made for lunch. How? In the First Class Manner, as a waiter comes thru with the little chimes heralding the mealtime. "Ah, bless me, this is pleasant, riding first class upon the rail." I skip lunch, however, and enjoy the miles clicking by as I continue to gaze out the rear windows. There are no curtains or drapes, however, a decided oversight in the refurbishing.

We stop at the small Amshack of a Benson station, and a half dozen passengers detrain at 12:40pm. We're almost two hours late. As we are on our way again, I raise the rear quarter panel by the door from time to time to observe the brake gauge, noting poundage applications. We approach a curve and the needle moves to 30 pounds.

Our SUNSET LIMITED rockets by Bowie at 2:05pm, where the long-unused coaling tower stands high against the sky. Lordsburg is reached at 2:55pm, with plenty of leeway to make Deming, where we arrive at 3:51pm.

I thank the porter for shining my shoes last night, and watch "Silver Penthouse" recede into the distance, red lights marking her going. Then all is motionless, save for some trucks on Interstate 10. Two railfans have gotten off with me, and it turns out that they are planning to go back on the westbound as I am. The lateness of our train had indicated a short wait, but wouldn't you know that train 1 is reported over an hour late.

We wander around town, read the revolving bank temp-time sign at a nippy 45 degrees. Back at the combination SP-Santa Fe station, a 100-car freight train roars by in 67 seconds, whistle blasting. Then an SP peddler shows up, and crew members lounge around the station-office waiting for the Santa Fe's Rincon turn. He never does show up. Finally, no. 1 shows its headlight down the line at 5:55pm. Engines 559 and 551 coast by, followed by baggage 1086, hi-levels 9949, 9946, 9920 (yell to the conductor who's leaning out a vestibule that we're Pullman passengers), dorm-lounge 3395, diner 8030, sleeper 2751 "Palm Dome" (10-6). The train stops and we walk the gravel towards the rear, passing 2351 "Regal Inn" (4-4-2) and Southern Railway "Tiger River" (10-6), and we step up into 9250 "Silver Horizon" (ex-CALIFORNIA ZEPHYR dome-observation). But, tacked on behind the solarium is SP business car 141 "Oakland" (Pullman, 1928), sporting Amtrak stripes.

Now, upon boarding the train, a problem develops. Earlier, one of the other railfans and I had decided to share a bedroom in order to get space in the observation car. Each of us had roomette tickets, and the reservations computer knew of our change. Unfortunately, there was no computer console at Deming, so we'd have to rely on the conductor's manifest. Our bedroom B turned out to be occupied by the flagman, who steadfastly refused to move, wouldn't divulge his name, and "dared" me to do anything about it. I was prepared to go to great lengths in insisting on our space, if necessary. But I hesitated and retreated for a number of reasons. Our tickets still read roomette, there was a business car on behind us, and... the next sleeper up had plenty of room and was one of my favorite cars: "Tiger River." We ended up there in Bedroom E.

What should a conductor do when confronted with the following information: First, two guys show up with tickets that read roomettes in a different car; one ticket is regular, the other a pass; both tickets (ironically) spell out the same roomette number in the same car; then they request Bedroom B in the observation car because it's special or something, which means kicking out the fellow trainman from the room; then, they want a refund because two roomettes cost $3.75 more than a bedroom. As it happened, our man let us have the bedroom in the Southern car, but figured that I'd have to pay $6.75 more and my friend would have to cough up $13.25..., but he'd let us ride without paying the extra amount because he was a nice guy and there was plenty of room. "But remember," he warned us, "you're still subject to bump." He felt he was doing us a favor. When all was said and done, we probably could have ended up in the rear car if we had really pressed the matter. But, as a bonus, "Tiger River" was blessed with one of Amtrak's female porters, who always brighten up a train.

ARIZONA
PHOENIX
PRESCOTT
Yuma
Tucson
Benson
Clifton
Silver City
Deming
Lordsburg
Bowie
Wilcox
Dragoon
Cochise
Willcox
Rincon
Las Cruces
El Paso
Camp Rice
Fabens
Sierra Blanca
Marfa
Alpine
Valentine
Presidio
Ruidoso
Pecos
Texas Hill
Maricopa
Casa Grande
Picacho
Tucson
Benson
Cutter
Rincon
Las Cruces
El Paso
Camp Rice
Fabens
Sierra Blanca
Marfa
Alpine
Valentine
Presidio
Ruidoso
Pecos
Texas Hill
Maricopa
Casa Grande
Picacho
Tucson
Benson
Dragoon
Wilcox
Cutter
Silver City
Clifton
Yuma
Gila City
Rhoades
Tacna
Wellton
Dateland
Gila Bend
Sentinel
Gila Bend
Crittenden
Nogales
Imuris
San Jose
Mex.
Tonto
Vic. Hi
Flowing Well
Pilot Knob
Ocotillo
Jacumba
Plaster City
Ocotillo Wells
Borrego
Mojave
Lancaster
Acton
Saugus
Newhall
Santa Susana
Chatsworth
Van Nuys
Burbank
Glendale
Pasadena
Monrovia
Azusa
Covina
Pomona
Ontario
Riverside
Colton
San Bernardino
Redlands
Beaumont
Banning
Indio
Coachella
Mecca
Salton Sea
Niland
Westmorland
Brawley
El Centro
Calexico
Seven Palms
Lancaster
Acton
Saugus
Newhall
Santa Susana
Chatsworth
Van Nuys
Burbank
Glendale
Pasadena
Monrovia
Azusa
Covina
Pomona
Ontario
Riverside
Colton
San Bernardino
Redlands
Beaumont
Banning
Indio
Coachella
Mecca
Salton Sea
Niland
Westmorland
Brawley
El Centro
Calexico
Seven Palms
Barstow
Victorville
Cajon
Summit
Mojave
Tehachapi
Bakersfield
Fresno
Merced
Modesto
Stockton
Sacramento
Oakland
San Francisco
San Jose
Santa Cruz
Salinas
Watsonville
Monterey
Santa Barbara
Ventura
Oxnard
Los Angeles
San Pedro
Long Beach
Santa Monica
Hollywood
Pasadena
Burbank
Glendale
Van Nuys
Chatsworth
Santa Susana
Saugus
Newhall
Acton
Lancaster
Mojave
Bishop
Owens Valley
Lone Pine
Independence
Big Pine
Bishop
Mammoth
June Lake
Lee Vining
Tioga Pass
Yosemite
Merced
Fresno
Hanford
Visalia
Bakersfield
Tehachapi
Mojave
Barstow
Victorville
Cajon
Summit
San Bernardino
Riverside
Ontario
Pomona
Covina
Azusa
Monrovia

I was awakened from a restful sleep by my companion's 5am call. Oh well, I might as well get up, too. It was right to the dome to watch the sunrise as we crawled up Beaumont Hill near West Palm Springs. Then I notice that some additional private cars are coupled on behind us. At Phoenix last night were added SP #107 "Del Monte" business car built in 1916, and SP #291 lounge (ex-SP 2987, built by Budd in 1950 for the SUNSET LIMITED). To satisfy my curiosity and that of RTN readers, I sneak back for a look. The lounge car has been beautifully refurbished, and looks as if it just came out of the Budd Company shops. Complete with French-Quarter styling, it has a pink and rouge interior with rose carpeting. The "Del Monte" crew greeted me, but said the car was running empty. I checked out its leaded glass china closet, the solid walnut panelling, the oak table, brass beds, etc. Back on the rear in the "Oakland," Mr. C. T. Babers, the Assistant General Manager of the railroad was likely still asleep.

By the time we crested the grade, I was seated in the diner for breakfast. Mr. Williamson, our waiter, immediately inquired as to coffee. By my second cup, the piping hot cheese omelet, ham and potatoes had arrived--just as delicious as last night's supper. Service was, if anything, better than the previous night. I couldn't help thinking of my trip west on this same train last May. I had suffered so-so food and indifferent and even downright discourteous service. Yet, just six months later, perfection! Was it due to a good crew, or had Amtrak's Three-Day Recurrent On-Board Services Training Program actually been taken to heart? I for one was very happy and contented, rating the crew a full "9" on RTN's rating scale.

The pleasure of the meal even led me to discount our 40-minute delay at Colton Yard, caused by some sloppy dispatching. We got out of there by 7:48am, and left Pomona at 8:15. During our stop at Colton, a passenger from car 2351 came back and complained to the dome lounge attendant that they were awakened at 5am by their porter, who told them to get up and get organized because he had to make the bed before the train arrived, etc. The passengers felt that since they had paid for a bed all the way to Los Angeles they should not be rousted out of it. I commented that they had every right to remain under the covers until the train reached the terminal, if they so desired. They added that the porter had answered no calls during the night, didn't shine shoes, and, it turned out, was not around to help with the luggage either. I thought darkly that if a porter tried to force me up so he could make the bed early, I would get up and let him do it, then climb back under those fresh clean sheets, making sure I left the bed down and unmade by terminal time. After all, the crew are paid for any work after the train gets in. (Later, the lounge attendant passed by our bedroom and jokingly said: "Well, I have to sweep the floor now, so you'd better go down to the end of the car and wait in the vestibule until I finish.")

At El Monte it was a red over green signal, and we turned and went down the old Pacific Electric main line via the San Bernardino Freeway (the new high-speed SP line), bypassing Alhambra. Los Angeles was reached by 8:58am, one hour and 28 minutes late.

An overall evaluation? The eastbound train was First Class Premier Service all the way. The westbound had its ups and downs, the dining car crew being its highlight. I still feel that it's a matter of the crew you happen to get at any particular time. A train's equipment adds much to the overall feel of a trip, but the crew's attitude is the definite deciding factor. Little things, like a surly porter, the train being late, business cars on behind the observation, make a difference too. I must in all honesty say that I believe Amtrak is finally, at long last, aware of the importance of upgrading crew morale and training, and is doing something about it. Still, an Amtrak train is like the little girl with the curl in the middle of her forehead: when the crew is good, the train is very, very good; but when it is bad, it is horrid.

LATEST AMTRAK RIDERSHIP FIGURES

SHOWN BELOW ARE THE LATEST RIDERSHIP DATA RELEASED BY AMTRAK, FOR SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER, 1976. IN THE TABLE, WE HAVE RANKED LONG DISTANCE TRAINS BY THEIR OCTOBER RIDERSHIP. SEE THE FIRST OCTOBER ISSUE OF RTN FOR PREVIOUS MONTHS--MAY, JUNE, JULY, AND AUGUST. DATA COURTESY OF AMTRAK'S MARKET RESEARCH DEPARTMENT.

LONG DISTANCE TRAINS

NOS.	TRAIN NAME	SEP	OCT	RANK
11-14	COAST STARLIGHT	37,620	33,570	1
60-61	MONTREALER	28,194*	31,409*	2
48-49	LAKE SHORE LIMITED	23,445	24,549	3
7-8	EMPIRE BUILDER	23,080	24,176	4
3-4	SOUTHWEST LIMITED	22,653	22,067	5
5-6	SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR	20,131	21,213	6
40-41	BROADWAY LIMITED	20,277	19,797	7
15-16	LONE STAR	17,298	17,998	8
9-10	NORTH COAST HIAWATHA	19,553	17,369	9
	Florida Trains**	14,719	15,487	10
30-31	NATIONAL LIMITED	14,263	14,901	11
58-59	PANAMA LIMITED	13,276	14,770	12
56-57	FLORIDIAN	10,391	11,376	13
68-69	ADIRONDACK	7,982	8,913	14
50-51	JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY	8,297	8,810	15
89-90	PALMETTO	11,072	7,316	16
1-2	SUNSET LIMITED	6,804	7,500	17
54-55	MOUNTAINEER	4,006	5,799	18
166/7	COLONIAL	4,326	5,200	19
21-22	INTER-AMERICAN	2,106	2,888	20
32-33	SHENANDOAH***		270	
	NY-LA thru car via K.C.	556	477	

*Includes NE Corridor psgrs. **Avg of 3 trains.
***Service began October 31.

First Class Total:	38,971	36,850
Coach Class Total:	301,015	309,979
Combined Total:	339,986	346,829

Systemwide totals: Sep 1,422,061 Oct 1,547,463

SHORT DISTANCE TRAINS

ROUTE	SEP	OCT
NYC - DC Metroliner	164,022	181,632
Northeast Corridor*	600,739	663,192
NY - Harrisburg	16,119	17,310
Phila - Harrisburg	62,266	67,102
Springfield - New Haven	17,302	21,032
Washington - Cumberland	14,345	16,651
NYC - Albany - Buffalo	43,246	48,681
Chicago - St. Louis	20,506	23,582
Chicago - Milwaukee	21,234	22,888
Chicago - Detroit	25,055	27,842
Chicago - Carbondale	10,880	12,880
Chicago - Quincy	5,508	8,366
Los Angeles - San Diego	39,941	40,990
Seattle - Portland	12,918	13,520
Seattle - Vancouver	5,849	6,300
Chicago - Dubuque	2,436	2,668
Oakland - Bakersfield	4,586	4,961
Chicago - Port Huron	5,432	7,427
Jackson - Detroit	4,523	5,535
Minneapolis - Superior	2,523	2,616
DC - Springfield thru car	1,245	1,654
Total:	1,080,675	1,196,829
Special Trains:	1,400	3,805

*DC - NYC - Boston; & NYC - Springfield

AMTRAK'S NEXT FIVE YEARS

AMTRAK'S FIVE-YEAR PLAN FOR MARKETING LONG DISTANCE PASSENGER TRAINS

The report by Amtrak to Congress and the DOT on its projections for the next half-decade of U.S. rail passenger service, mentioned earlier in RTN, is basically a conservative one, written with an eye on a hostile DOT that oversees it. Budget-wise, the document calls for passengers continuing to cover thru the "fare box" over 40% of Amtrak's expenses, a far cry from Secretary of Transportation Coleman's contention that by the year 2000 Amtrak will need subsidies "ten times as great as its passenger revenues." Amtrak asks the question, "Where is Amtrak going?" as well as "Where should it be going?" in the document's introduction. Then Amtrak answers the first question by declaring that the Plan is "one answer" to the question, "especially if we stay roughly on our present course", one that "seeks to invest funds judiciously" in developing a passenger rail system.

We will now summarize, using Amtrak's own words as much as possible, what the corporation plans to do in marketing its long distance service under this conservative plan. We start with the trains slated to receive bi-level equipment:

SUNSET LIMITED: ridership has declined, but the decline is moderating; the decline is due to fares too high and capacity limitations, as well as the tri-weekly schedule. Appropriate changes are required. Bi-level introduction in 1978 will be accompanied by excursion travel packages to produce annual 3-5% increase over 5 years.

INTER-AMERICAN: changes of last Oct 31 were expected to increase ridership 19% by 1978, leveling off by 1979. Will get new bi-level cars in 1980, with hi-level cars introduced as the new cars bump them off another route.

NORTH COAST HIAWATHA: conversion to daily service being studied. Bi-levels coming in late 1977 will increase ridership 7%, 8%, and 7% in 1978, 1979, 1980. More excursion and tour programs will be used, especially in Spokane-Seattle market.

EMPIRE BUILDER: basic trend of relatively slight growth expected to continue. Bi-levels in late 1977 and promotional programs expected to produce modest growth in 1978, 6% in 1979, leveling to 4 or 5% in latter years of Plan.

LONE STAR: nominal growth until bi-levels come in 1979, then 7% in 1979, with ridership stabilized by 1981. Study feasibility of lower end-point fares.

PANAMA LIMITED: growth sluggish to negative in near past, due to substandard equipment, erratic on-time performance, and worsening schedule times. Improved track should help in future. Will get bi-levels by 1980, and interim hi-levels by 1979, which, along with faster schedules, will reverse the decay in passenger growth. Will study possibility of adding service to exploit intermediate markets.

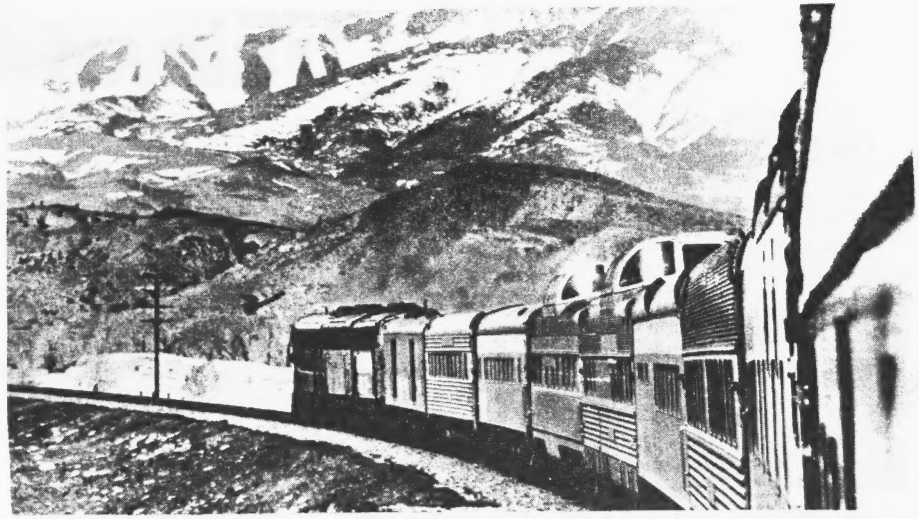
COAST STARLIGHT: has been one of best Amtrak routes. Ridership growth leveled off in recent years due to train reaching capacity. Marketing focus will be on the Oakland-L.A. portion. Bi-levels by end of 1978 will produce 3% increase in 1979, 5% in 1980 and 1981.

FLORIDIAN: changes of last Oct 31, along with special advertising programs and better running times, expected to produce a modest increase. New bi-levels in 1980 will produce 5% growth by 1981.

SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR: bi-levels in 1978, with possible better fare structure to compete better with airlines, and special excursion programs for short-distance markets on route, will produce 6% increase, with increase stabilized at 3-5% in later years of Plan.

SOUTHWEST LIMITED: passenger volume recently declining, due to noncompetitive fares, train up to capacity, or other causes. Volume will stabilize after bi-levels come in late 1978, and remain stable for remaining years. Short-distance excursion fares and better general fare structure will be studied.

Plans for marketing Eastern routes with low-level equipment:



EMPIRE BUILDER, pictured here in early Amtrak photo, will be first to receive new bi-level equipment. Scene: Glacier National Park.

JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY/MOUNTAINEER: assumes moderate growth when service returns to Indianapolis. Restoration of Indianapolis may lower average passenger trip length, but as ConRail track work accelerates, some shorter running times will be achieved. These will create 5-6% growth rate from 1978-1981. New low-level cars in 1982. No specific pricing and promotion programs contemplated.

NATIONAL LIMITED: re-routing thru Cincinnati planned, then possible schedule changes. Decline in ridership as track problems continue, then increase as Cincinnati is added. Average trip length will decline, but selective fares will attempt to halt this. Tapered fare structure with attractive end-point prices should achieve long-term improvement in trip length. New cars in 1981, and 2% growth with more growth in later years.

FLORIDA TRAINS: volume changes erratically over time, partly a function of changes in service. Will restore a pattern close to the historical pattern, keep present services intact, but vary services seasonally. Will try to reduce severe seasonal variations by off-peak discounts and excursion programs. New cars in 1980, and 4% growth rate in 1980 and 1981.

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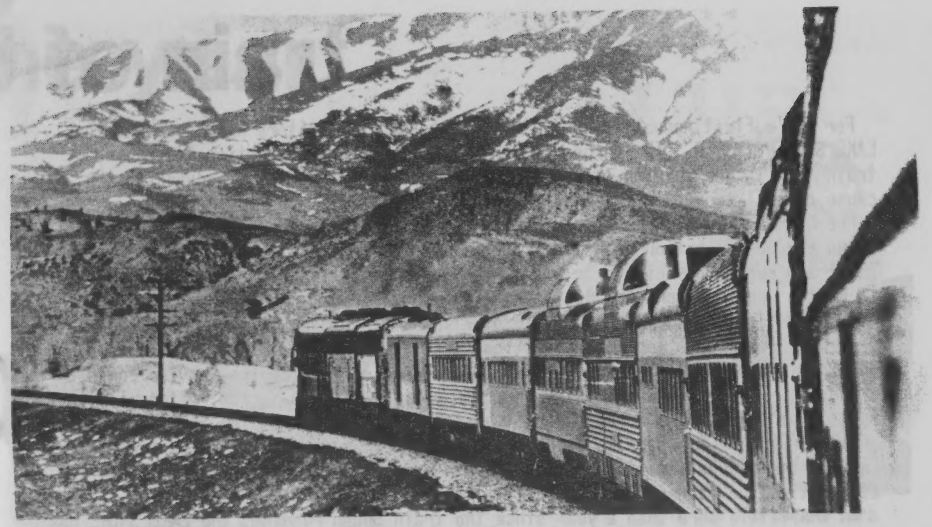

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RTN receives a very large amount of mail concerning this train, and its supporters are vocal in their involvement with this rail service. In particular, we single out the Ohio Association of Railroad Passengers as an organization that has been both persistent and effective in its efforts to achieve better rail service for its area. The kind of interest generated by a service such as this serves well the cause of rail travel for the nation as a whole, and bodes well for the future of our country as it stumblingly moves toward a better, more balanced transportation system.

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DERAILMENTS (continued from page 3)

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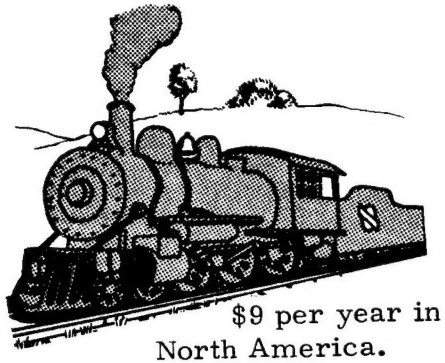

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A ZEPHYR TRIP ENDS ABRUPTLY

by J. David Cromwell

It was 4:30pm on Dec 15 when I walked into Denver Union Station. The courteous girl at the Amtrak window said there was one available roomette on train 6, the SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR, to Chicago. I decided to take it, and handed here my USA Rail Pass so she could upgrade me from coach.

Number 6 was 5 minutes late getting into the station, and there was much activity as the train was split and the dome coach spliced in between the lounge and the third coach. Switching complete, car line no. 631 "Pine Island" was ready for me to board, and we departed at 5:50pm, ten minutes late.

After referencing the consist with my Car Spotters Guide, I went for cocktails in the lounge car. Things were hopping, and Mr. Pipkins the bartender was extremely busy, but most efficient, and offered a twist of lemon for my Scotch and soda without my asking. Lots of young people were aboard, and I talked with a couple of people I recognized from the COAST STARLIGHT on the previous Sunday. I was on a 14-day Rail Pass, and this was the next to last segment of my coast-to-coast cruise.

Dinner consisted of a crisp salad with Amtrak Bleu Cheese dressing, superbly broiled steak with baked potato and green beans, and a good bottle of California burgundy. At the table were Mary Lou and her two children, John, 8, and Melody, 4. This was their first train ride, and had we not been late in departing Denver, they would have missed the train. They boarded as we were just beginning to move, and left their baggage to be forwarded on tomorrow. The children had never seen a sleeping car, of course, so I took them for a tour of "Pine Island" after dinner. They were in heaven and persuaded their mother to reserve them a bedroom for the return trip from New Jersey after Christmas.

Craving a little Cognac, I returned to the lounge shortly, where Pipkins poured a double Hennessey in a plastic glass with a club soda on the side. Then the lights went out for the first time. For the next hour or so, the lights flickered on and off, and finally in despair, the engineer ran out of alternatives and last call was made before the car was closed for the night around ten o'clock.

Our arrival in Lincoln, Nebraska was right on schedule, and woke me from a deep sleep. I opened the door to roomette 7 and asked Bill, our attendant, where we were. "Lincoln," he responded, and I closed my door and sank back into sleep before we left the platform.

Then there was a sharp bump and I was wide awake! As if it had happened a thousand times before, I knew exactly what was next: "My God, we're going on the ground!"

Sure enough, more violent jolts followed, as I hung onto my bed for dear life. The car lurched to a halt and tilted slightly to my left. I lay perfectly still for what seemed like an eternity. I wasn't hurt, but for some reason I couldn't think of what to do next. With great difficulty I finally sat upright and tried to open my door. It was not going to budge without a lot of effort due to our sharp list. By the time I got the door to slide, the flagman was staggering thru the dimly lit corridor asking if anyone was hurt. All answers were negative.

Then I remembered that Pipkins was in the roomette opposite mine. There had been no answer from him. Frantically I pounded on his door. Still no answer. Fumbling at the awkward angle, I managed to get dressed and zip up the one bag which I had aboard. Still no word from roomette 8. I knocked again and yelled louder. A garbled reply came thru the door. "Are you all right?" I called out. "Huh, what happened?" "We've run on the ground. Are you hurt?" I asked. He mumbled that he didn't think so, and I picked up my bag and felt my way along the sides of the wall to the vestibule. Bill was working with the flagman to get people out the door and on what had been the roadbed. I tossed my bag out and jumped onto the soft earth.

The sight I saw was truly a nightmare! The sleeper in front of us was still coupled, but leaning considerably more to the left and down an embankment. The diner,

lounge, and the dome coach were on their sides, the trucks hanging crazily in the air. Up ahead, the three coaches and baggage cars were still upright and on the roadbed, but definitely not on the rails. All ten cars had derailed, and I learned later that the second SDP40F was also on the ground.

Emergency lights were flashing everywhere. People were shouting instructions thru the crisp morning air, and someone was pounding on the window of bedroom D in car 630. Our attendant tried to smash the window with a sledge hammer, but the Lexan wouldn't give. Rescue workers were called to go into the car to bring out the terrified occupants. Already people were being brought up the embankment on stretchers and taken away in red fire department rescue vans. I felt helpless.

The track was non-existent where I was standing. The right hand rail lay on its side among the splinters of rotted ties. The left rail was nowhere to be seen. Wires of some kind were drooping everywhere, so we were told to remain where we were until a rescue worker could guide us down the hill and to waiting police cars.

Among the assorted emergency equipment, knots of people were exchanging experiences and embracing familiar faces they remembered from earlier in the trip. I spotted John and Melody in an ambulance. Mary Lou was a nurse, and after getting her children out of the wreckage of the overturned dome coach, she had gone back to render assistance. By now Pipkins was out of our car, but had collapsed on the ground. He was helped to a waiting rescue van and I didn't see him again.

Sheriff's deputies loaded us into a squad car and drove us to the Sarpy County Court House in nearby Papillion, Nebraska. In the large bomb shelter-like basement they served us coffee, as people began slowly to trickle in from the wreck. Everyone talked a great deal, but the children were quiet and the atmosphere was relatively calm, considering what we had all been thru.

The coaches that had remained upright were the last to be evacuated and no roll call was attempted until every passenger had either been taken to the hospital or had joined us in the court house. A last call for anyone who thought they had an injury was made. Accompanied by much protesting, Mary Lou picked John and Melody up and whisked them away. John had complained of his right eye, and it was bloodshot and watering. It was after 5:00am now. We had hit the ground at 3:15.

Amtrak and Burlington Northern officials were arriving now and accident report forms were being passed out to everyone. Jim Jonas, an Amtrak supervisor, had been a passenger on the train. He was functioning quite well, and seemed to have taken charge. Buses were being brought to take us to Chicago, he informed us, and arrangements would be made there for those with other destinations.

The press had arrived and there were lights, cameras and microphones circulating among the assemblage scattered about on the floor and on the tables and chairs. Someone yelled that WLS in Chicago was on the phone and wanted to speak to someone in authority.

A bus ride to Chicago from this little town just outside of Omaha didn't appeal to me at this point, so when I heard someone say airport, my ears pricked. Supposedly a private jet from New York was bringing Mr. Reistrup and some other officials into the airport, and a sheriff's deputy was being dispatched to get them. I asked for a lift.

My accident report had been completed, and I informed Mr. Jonas that I would contact him later, and that I was leaving for the airport. I picked up my bags and hurried into the waiting unmarked police car. We arrived just in time for me to catch the 6:30am United flight to Chicago. They held the plane for me, and the door was closed behind me. I took a window seat in the first class section, pulled the shade down, and closed my eyes.

RTN's long-awaited Rail Travel Yearbook 1975 will be published on Dec. 30. Be sure your order is in. $3.50 per copy postpaid (add tax in Calif.). Order from: MESSAGE MEDIA, Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709.

Mixed Train of Thoughts

AMERICAN FREEDOM TRAIN completes its Bicentennial tour of the nation at 5pm Dec 31 in Miami, after arriving there from Fort Lauderdale at 11:10am Dec 24 (10 minutes late). Peter Spurney, president of the American Freedom Train Foundation, told the press that the train would break even or maybe make a profit, after sale of the railroad cars to the best bidder (asking price $750,000). The train totalled up 25,833 miles on its tour, visiting 138 cities in 48 states..... THE FREEDOM TRAIN'S locomotive 4449, which was with it at its last stop, will be moved to Birmingham for the winter, as noted last issue. The 3-day Amtrak excursion connected with the move (Jan 14-16) will cost $80 for all 3 days (excluding overnight accommodations), or $30 per day. Further information or tickets are available from: Mr. M. B. Pettyjohn, Coordinator of Sales, Amtrak 955 L'Enfant Plaza North, S.W., Washington DC 20024. Include an SSAE. The train will leave Miami at 8am Jan 14, West Palm Beach 9:30, Sebring 11:30, Winter Haven 1:20pm, Orlando 3:15, ar Sanford 4:15pm. The trip behind engine 4449 continues Jan 15, leaving Sanford 8:30am, Jacksonville 11:45, Valdosta GA 2:15pm, arriving Thomasville GA at 4pm. On Jan 16 it leaves Thomasville at 8am, Dothan AL 10:30, Montgomery 2pm, arriving Birmingham AL 4:30pm. Consist of the special train will be baggage, 2 dome coaches, 12 coaches, galley-lounge, and dome parlor observation car 9310. Snacks, sandwiches and beer will be available on the train. Short trips are also possible on the train, e.g., Miami-West Palm Beach will cost $11..... AMTRAK'S SIXTH ANNIVERSARY next May 1 is expected to be connected with a 4449 transcontinental trip and the startup of a new train. Amtrak's plans, not yet finalized, call for a transcon trip from Birmingham to Portland OR to return the FREEDOM TRAIN's engine 4449 to that city, which owns it, in April 1977, probably running over UP on the Salt Lake-Boise-Portland leg. The rest of the route would be via St. Louis, Kansas City, and Denver. The train would reach Portland shortly before the startup of the new Salt Lake-Seattle train (as yet unnamed, but numbered 17-18), taking the same route partly as a publicity move. May 1 is expected to be the official opening of the experimental Idaho train. An Amtrak spokesman pointed out that this could be the last transcon steam excursion ever run in the U.S.....

* * *

THE PANAMA LIMITED is expected to receive Amfleet equipment by Feb 1. Train crews are already carrying Amfleet operating manuals in their luggage. Trains 58-59 are expected to take the following form: two P30 locomotives (or perhaps one F40 and one P30), Ambag baggage car, a number of 60-seat legrest Amcoaches, an Amcafe/Amdinette or conventional diner, two conventional sleepers, and a 1900-series power car to provide steam for conventional cars. Amtrak is reportedly taking over the diesel shop and car shops at New Orleans on Jan 1..... PLANS FOR MIAMI to Orlando daily roundtrip Amfleet service have been tabled by the Florida DOT after Amtrak issued a cost estimate about 10 times greater than original ones, mostly due to high incremental costs asked by SCL. The service was to have begun on Dec 1.....

THE GULF COAST route will be looked at again. The Mobile Press reports that Amtrak has ordered a fresh study of the possibility of operating a Jacksonville FL to New Orleans train. A 1974 study had found a projected annual deficit of $1.5 million for the route..... A NEW TRAIN between New York and Albany is reportedly being considered by Amtrak, tho plans are not firmed up yet. The train would leave NY at 7:30am and leave on the return from Albany at 4:30pm..... THE SOUTHBOUND MONTREALER derailed 3 miles east of the New Haven station the morning of Dec 18. The rear 7 cars of the 11-car train left the track, causing one minor injury among the 220 passengers and crew. The derailed 7 cars were sent back to New Haven, while the rest of the train continued its journey.....

THE NEW TRAIN between Nogales AZ and Guaymas in Mexico evidently began operation on Nov 6, according to a newspaper clipping we received. The new 2-car FIAT autovia makes the trip tri-weekly in 5 hours, 20 minutes, at an average speed of 60mph. U.S. and Mexican officials reportedly were aboard for an inaugural run Nov 4.....

MASSIVE ROCK SLIDE and cave-in blocked the CN mainline at St. Fabien, P.Q. on Dec 16, and possibly also the highway. Trains 14 & 15, the OCEAN LIMITED, and 11 & 12, the SCOTIAN, were rerouted from Montreal to the NTR (National Transcontinental Ry Line) at Joffre, thence via Edmundston, McGivney and Moncton, then back to the main. Railiners 616, 617, 618, & 619 b etween Moncton, Edmundston and Ste Foy were removed, as the route was serviced by the regular trains. Railiner service was instituted between Moncton, Newcastle, Bathurst, Campbellton, Mont Joli and Rimousky and train 14 & 15 operating times; and between Moncton and Campbellton on train 11 & 12 times. Railiner service was operated between Joffre and Trois Pistoles on the mainline not affected by the rock slide, operating on train 14 & 11's schedules.....

* * *

THE LONE STAR and SOUTHWEST LIMITED will again run as separate trains starting with the spring scheule change at the end of April. The trains have been running separately during heavy holiday travel periods, but the former schedule will be restored next April, an Illinois newspaper reported Amtrak as saying..... "THE PEANUT SPECIAL" train from Plains GA to Carter's inauguration in Washington will reach that city on Jan 20. In addition, travel agent Bill Hartman has chartered a special Southern Railway train from Atlanta To Washington for the event, which reached Washington Jan 19...

A COMPLETE CHECKLIST of the Oct 31 Amtrak timetables we've seen, aside from the nationwide schedule, follows: form B, NY-Savannah-Florida & Chicago-Florida; form 1, NY-Washington; form 2, NY-Phila; form 3, Boston/Springfield-Washington; form 4, NY-Boston/Springfield; form 5, NY-Phila-Harrisburg; form 6, Chicago-Texas/New Orleans; form 7, East-Midwest; form 9, NY State & Washington-NY-Montreal; form 10, Chicago-West Coast; form 12, Midwest corridors; form 13, West Coast & NY-New Orleans-L.A.; and form 14, Norfolk/Washington-Cincinnati-Chicago. An error appears in the miles & kilometers column of the Florida train schedules in the nationwide timetable (form A): in the Winter Haven-Miami segment the kilometer readings are actually miles, but mysteriously 3 digits different from the actual miles column.....

* * *

ABOUT TRAIN MOVIES: another train film, "Tracks," is playing in Los Angeles. It was reportedly filmed entirely aboard a SAN DIEGANtrain. It's described as "The most provocative film of the Cannes Festival." Then there's "Bound for Glory," the True Story of Woody Guthrie. A friend saw "Silver Streak" a few days ago and reports that the scenery thru the train window inexplicably shifts markedly within moments --from desert to Rockies. Reader Mike Blaszak says that some film footage depicting a tower uses Chicago Union Station switching operations as a backdrop, with a ConRail-leased BN switcher working with Amtrak baggage cars..... AMTRAK OPERATED ITS regular Chicago Symphony Orchestra special to Milwaukee and return on Dec 13, a practice dating from Milwaukee Road times still repeated monthly in the winter. Consist of the train: engine 578, dome coach 9481, dome lounge 9812 "Silver Chalet", and coach 4550. One of these trains was probably Amtrak's first special-movement charter, for on May 3, 1971 the last of the 1970-71 season operated.....

NARP'S REGION XII will hold its Second Annual Meeting on Jan 8 in the Garden Room of the L.A. Hilton, 930 Wilshire Blvd, from 1-4pm. Hilton is one mile from LAUPT, with convenient bus connections available. All rail supporters are invited.....

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION on Dec 20 okayed an Amtrak petition to close the train station at Riverbank CA on the SAN JOAQUIN route (tickets can be purchased on the train). Amtrak has another petition in to close the Merced station as well.....

FRENCH NATIONAL RAILROADS and Amtrak completed an agreement Dec 28 to sell each other's unlimited travel passes starting Feb 1. French National Railroads will sell the U.S.A. Rail Pass at six locations in Paris, and in Nice, Marseilles, Bordeaux, Lyon, Strasbourg, and Calais, while Amtrak will sell the French pass,

"France-Vacances," at its ticket offices in Washington, Philadelphia, and Boston. Said Al Michaud, Amtrak's VP-Marketing, "The uniting of two railroad marketing organizations is the first step in a move to combine all the world's railroads into a marketing force that will give the international traveler easy access to rail transportation"..... SUPPORTERS OF THE revival of the DEL MONTE have little to report these days. The Pacific Grove and Carmel city councils have stated opposition to spending transit funds needed for their bus system on the proposed train. Santa Clara county strongly supports it, and is determined to have it run at least from San Francisco to Gilroy if not as far as Monterey. Meanwhile, Amtrak (Dec 22) has announced a bus connection from the COAST STARLIGHT at Salinas for travelers to or from Carmel, Monterey, Seaside, Fort Ord, and Marina. Monterey Peninsula Transit buses now leave hourly from the Salinas Amtrak station, and a 70¢ exact-change fare is paid the bus driver. Trip to Carmel takes 1hr 35mins, and buses run daily except Sundays and holidays, the days most tourists visit the Monterey Peninsula.....

AMTRAK TRAIN 33, the SHENANDOAH, terminated at Grafton due to a B&O freight derailment, on Nov 11, and passengers were bused to Cincinnati. Passengers for train 32 the next day were bused to Grafton..... FIRST NORTHBOUND TRIP of the daily INTER-AMERICAN, train 22, was detoured via Godfrey IL to Roodhouse to Isles (Springfield) due to a freight derailment on ICG on Oct 31. Trains 303 and 305 likewise detoured, and all were reported running about 2 hours late..... AMTRAK BEGAN TESTING the first bi-level shell for truck reliability in Nov. Testing between Brighton Park and Joliet IL was done on Nov 13 & 14. On Nov 19 & 20 a test train ran between Woodcrest and Effingham. Consist was one locomotive and two hi-level cars, along with the new bi-level..... THE AMTRAK MOUNTAINEER, train 55 on Nov 12 detoured from Ingleside WV to Elmore to West Gilbert to Wharncliffe. The dome car was set out at Ingleside to meet clearances. An N&W freight crew took the car to Bluefield and train 55 of Nov 13 picked it up.....

* * *

PRESIDENT PAUL REISTRUP of Amtrak finally became a member of the Amtrak Board of Directors when President Ford signed Amtrak's authorization bill on Oct 19 (included in the "Rail Transportation Improvement Act", reports NARP. Reistrup spoke to the NARP Board by telephone, and the Oct NARP newsletter reveals some interesting comments he made: the next generation of single-level cars, for Eastern trains, will have larger windows than Amfleet cars; he termed the Amfleet car "a corridor, people-mover type of train". He said that research needs to come up with a replacement for Lexan. And he said that Amtrak hopes to run the SUNSET LIMITED daily by next summer..... THE BUSTRAK RUNS: A Greyhound bus connection between Grand Rapids MI and the Amtrak station at Kalamazoo (called the Bustrak) began operation Dec 21 under state subsidy. There are 2 daily round trips, 7 days a week..... COAST TO COAST on 50 bucks? Greyhound announces a $50 one-way fare to anywhere in the U.S. with stopovers, effective Jan 3-Mar 31, with one child under 12 free. Continental Trailways will follow suit, pending ICC approval..... LATE NEWS FLASH on the awful mess caused by the BN embargo on Amtrak SDP40F engines: Amtrak's engine shortage is extreme, and one P30 and 4 E units were scraped up to power the SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR out of Chicago Dec 29, leaving 4½ hours late. By the time train 5 reached Galesburg a brake application had flattened wheels on 3 of the engines, and no other locos acceptable to BN could be found. The train sat all night in Galesburg, with passengers aboard, until it finally was annulled entirely. Out of 350 passengers, 67 elected to take a bus to Denver, and for the others 2 airplanes were chartered.....

A SOUTHERN RAILWAY freight train derailed about 20 miles south of Washington DC, at Burke VA, on Dec 20. The SOUTHERN CRESCENT, running in 2 sections, was detoured on C&O from Orange VA to Doswell VA, thence RF&P to Washington, arriving 4 hrs late..

ONE OF TRANSPORTATION Secretary Coleman's most important accomplishments, he has said, was getting minority contractors to do more work on railroad renovation. However, late in December, two Senators, Birch Bayh of Indiana and Clifford Case of New Jersey, criticized the DOT for failing to do just that.....

CARS & CONSISTS

*SOME NORTHWESTERN CONSISTS during the BN embargo on SDP40F engines: COAST STARLIGHT, train 11, Seattle Dec 22: engines BN 6436, Amtrak 376 & 377 (F units); cars 1054, 1502, 4462, 4855, 4853, 4491, 8102, 4871, 4508, 4542, 4863, 4540, 4851, 3351, 8071, 2715 "Pine Crest", 2710 "Pine Arroyo", 2365 "Regal Hill." COAST STARLIGHT connection Portland-Seattle (train 14) Dec 19 (1st day of embargo): 2 BN engines of SD40 and SD45 class, Amtrak 200-series (F40), undetermined no. of Amfleet cars. NORTH COAST HIAWATHA, train 10, Seattle, Dec 22: engines BN 6322, BN 6454, BN steam generator car 16; cars 2263 "Placid Lake", 2659 "Silver Isle", 8093, dome 9810 "Silver Club", 4852, 4520, dome 9482, 4821, 1033 (consist reversed to improve heat to occupied cars; left 57" late, took south (ex-NP) line due to closing of GN line by freight derailment at Skykomish WA). EMPIRE BUILDER, train 8, Seattle, Dec 23: engines BN 6487, BN 6621, Amtrak steam generator car 1911; cars 2255 "Star Vale", 2661 "Silver Plain", dome 9211, 8049, dome 9365 "River View", 5691, 4547, dome 9450 "Silver Bridle", 4533, 4864, dome 9485, 1554, 1106, SP 6652 (consist reversed). Train 7, same, had engines BN 6465, BN 6518, BN steam generator car, cars unknown. SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR (train no.?), Galesburg IL, Dec 24: engines 700 (P30), 402 & 440 (E9As); cars 1090, 1043, 1402, 2250 "Star Bay", 2651 "Silver Shore", 2733 "Pine Hill", 8074, 3331, 4825, 5014, dome 9460, 4814, 4827, 4815, 1048 (consist reversed). EMPIRE BUILDER, train 8, Pasco Dec 24: engines BN 6316, BN 6494, Amtrak steam generator car 1910; cars 1356, 1035, 1540, 4551, 4868, dome 9470, 4494, dome 9451 "Silver Lodge", dome 9364 "Prairie View", 8097, dome 9220, 2657 "Silver Chasm" (consist back to normal order).

*SAN JOAQUIN, train 711, Nov 30: engines 376, 377 (F units); cars 7521, 7522, 7523, 7524, 8107, 7530, 7531. (All 8 Amfleet cars used on other consist during heavy Thanksgiving weekend.)

*ILLINOIS ZEPHYR, (train no.?), Galesburg IL, Dec 12: engine 498 (E9A); Amcoaches 21108, 21114, 21192, 21178, Amlounge 20206 (problems lately with P30 engines).

*NATIONAL LIMITED, train 30, Pittsburgh Dec 21: engine 591; cars 1024, 1025, 2600 "Pacific Bay", 3202 "Laurel Stream", 2810 "Mobile River", 5422, 5443, 5416, 5444, 5430, 5407 (5444 & 5430 added here).

*LAKE SHORE LIMITED, train 448, Framingham Dec 12: engines 310, 307 (E8As); cars 3640 "Miles Standish", 5640, 5454, 2535 "Swan", 1306, PC 1591. Train 449, same: engines 295, 285 (E8As); cars 3630 "Casimir Pulaski", 5623, 5648, 2530 "Bobolink", 1065, PC 1596 (last car--with drumhead--used as "caboose" to guide backup move).

*NIGHT OWL, train 67, New York, Dec 21: engine? baggage?; cars 2697 ex-SP sleeper with electric power?, Amcafe 20007, Amcoaches 21845, 21820, 21819, deadhead 21061, 1291 power car.

*NIAGARA RAINBOW, train 64, Dec 17: engines 236, 237 (E units?); cars 1605, 6446, 3956, 6439, 3954, 6429, 6449, 6419, 6408, 3957.

*LONE STAR, train 16, Kansas City, Dec 27: engines 502, 528; cars 1039, 9915, 9951, 3390, 8039, 2720 "Pine Gorge", 2637 "Pacific Terrace", 2725 "Pine Lodge", 4822, 1108 off at K.C., (deadhead from Chicago:) ATSF 51 "Topeka", ATSF 52 "Atchison", ATSF 53 "Mountainair", ATSF inspection car 89 (cars to Pasadena's Rose Bowl).

*OCEAN LIMITED, CN train 15-18, Halifax N.S. Dec 22: engines 6773 (Alco MP18A), 6631 (Alco MP18B), 6516 (GM MP18A); cars bag 9638, coaches 5386, 5434, coach cafe 3035, dinette 429, coaches 5560, 5421, 5229, 5227, Dayniter 5707, slpr 1621 "Barrie", diner 1345, lounge 2310, slprs 1181, 1168, 2138, 2092, dorm 2007.

CORRECTION: In the ridership data on page 9, the ranks of the PALMETTO and SUNSET LIMITED should be reversed, with the SUNSET ranked 16th and the PALMETTO 17th.

QUOTES OF THE WEEK***

"There is no justification for intercity passenger service on the West Coast."
--SP Chairman Benjamin Biaggini, quoted in Railway Age, Dec 13.

PENINSULA COMMUTER PLAN (continued from page 4)

using buses on 280 and 101. The annual patronage would total 24.6 million. It works out to a capital and operating cost per passenger of $1.54, the most economical of the final options considered by PENTAP but one: eliminating the SP and extending BART to Millbrae for an interchange with a Peninsula bus system. This would cost $1.48 per passenger, the much higher capital costs of the BART extension being offset by lower operating costs.

The SP has made it clear to the MTC that it does not like the trend of events in the Peninsula Corridor as they bear on the company's commute rail properties. Vice President A. D. DeMoss expressed concern to the MTC in November about the direction which the PENTAP study had taken. "Since our present commute operation, which provides good service at a low cost continues to lose patrons," Mr. DeMoss said, "it is obvious that the fixed rail commute system is not what the public wants. The dedication of public funds in further expanding an undesired, money-losing service is not justified and no demographic study or mathematical formula can change a fact of life. Peninsula travelers prefer the convenience of door-to-door service by motor vehicles."

The SP would oppose any plan, he added, that interferes with its freight operations on the Peninsula. Mr. DeMoss sent another letter to the MTC for its Dec 15 meeting on the PENTAP proposal, again maintaining that the commute system had been a failure in attracting the public from the freeways. The company said that the "transit level" of service proposed in Alternative B, particularly in off-peak hours, would "most adversely affect the economy and employment of the Peninsula," by interfering with freight operations.

Before the Commissioners voted on the PENTAP plan they received assurances from their consultants that Alternative B would be fully compatible with the SP's freight movements, currently running at 8 trains daily. The company itself, they pointed out, historically has not operated freight trains during the 5 heavy commute hours.

The second SP communication to the MTC also expressed the company's strong feelings that "the legislature should be fully informed" on Alternative B, a fair indication that the management will carry its opposition into the committee hearings on the Peninsula transit plan, presumably to be scheduled later in 1977 by the Assembly and Senate.

However, with the MTC's action in December, there are now formidable political forces on the other side, not so much opposed to the SP as in favor of the proposal to continue and improve the SP's service. Indeed, there is a wide body of opinion, among planners and commuters alike, that the SP should continue to operate the service. There is consequently good reason to assume that the future transit agency will be flexible in its demands for greater off-peak use of the rail line. Members of the MTC have said they share the railroad's concerns about jobs and the Peninsula economy.

In accepting the PENTAP recommendation, the MTC has ended 25 years of study and analysis of the Peninsula Corridor. The Commission is backed by the 3 Peninsula counties: San Francisco, San Mateo and Santa Clara, spokesmen for which all endorsed the plan at the December meeting. Coming from the regional transportation planning authority of the Bay Area, MTC's recommendation to the legislature will receive thoughtful attention. The direction taken by the PENTAP study now appears to be leading toward a legislative proposal to establish or name a public agency to negotiate with the railroad. PENTAP may suggest a new West Bay transit authority, or an entity set up under a joint powers agreement signed by the 3 counties. It might also recommend CalTrans, which has moved into rail passenger service in the L.A.-San Diego corridor.

In the meantime, the California Public Utilities Commission, an agency with very broad regulatory powers over transportation companies in the state, is holding up the SP's request for a doubling of passenger fares on the Peninsula run, pending the completion of MTC's studies this winter, altho the PUC staff recently endorsed a 25% interim increase.

The new transit authority, if enacted by the Legislature, could ease the SP's financial load in another way: by offering operating subsidies to the company, a route the SP management has found unacceptable up to now. Presumably the PUC and its staff will be watching developments in Sacramento with as much interest as the SP's commuters and the Peninsula transit planners, whose labors are now so close to completion.

INDEX TO RTN, VOL. 6, 1976

An index to major articles, excluding "Mixed Train of Thoughts" columns. Each item gives issue identification and beginning page number. For example, "2Mar3" means Second March issue, page 3.

ACCIDENTS: Auto-Train, 1Mar3; B'way Ltd, 2Dec3; frequency of, 2Dec3; Illini, 1Dec3; JW Riley, 1Feb6, 2Feb19, 1Jul10; Lone Star, 1Dec 3; Panama Ltd, 1Aug3, 2Sep3; 1Oct3, 2Nov3; SF Zephyr, 2Oct3, 1Dec3, 2Dec15; So. Crescent, 1Dec3; Sunset Ltd, 2Jan11.

AMFLEET: N.E. introduction, 2Jan3; L.A. display, 1Apr3, 2Apr12; proposed dome bilevel, 1Apr10; Amlounge 1Apr11.

AMTRAK CAR COMPARISON TABLE, 2Oct15.

AMTRAK 5-YR. PLAN, 1Nov3, 2Dec10.

ARROWHEAD, 2Mar3, 1Apr3.

BI-LEVEL CARS: Sightseeing car, 1Apr10; order changed, 1Aug10; car design, 2Oct13; Sightseer order, 2Nov12.

BN EMBARGO ON LOCOMOTIVES, 2Dec3.

CAMPAIGN TRAINS: Buckley, 2Oct3; Democratic, 1Aug3, 2Sep3; Ford, 2Apr3, 1Oct3, 2Oct3.

CANADIAN PSGR TRAIN PLAN: 2Jan4, 1Feb7, 2Apr4.

COMMUTER RAIL: Boston, 1Nov6; Cleveland, 1Mar10; LIRR, 2Aug8; SP, 1Nov9, 2Dec4; Sunset Coast Line, 1Jun7; Washington DC, 2Mar10.

EDITORIALS & REVIEWS: Freedom of Mobility, 1Feb5; Energy Costs of Trains, 1Feb16; Amtrak Fifth Anniversary, 2Apr6.

ELECTIONS: Effect on trains, 1Nov3.

FUNDING, AMTRAK: 2Jan4, 2Apr3, 2Aug3, 1Sep3, 1Dec17.

KANSAS CITY SWITCHING: 2Nov20.

LOCOMOTIVES: AMT-125 diesel, 1Apr10; Budd SPV-2000 car, 1Sep11; F40, 1Apr12; French electric, 2Jun4; Swedish electric, 1Oct3.

NEW SERVICES: (see also Amfleet) Auto-Train/Floridian, 1Sep3, 1Nov13; Caltrak San Diegan, 1Sep12; Boston Greyhound connection, 1Jul7; Colonial, 1Jul8; Las Vegas Ltd, 2Mar3; Palmetto, 1Jul9; Shenandoah, 1Jun3, 2Sep8, 1Nov11.

N.E. CORRIDOR: purchase, 1Mar3, 2Mar3, 2Mar4; blocked, 2Sep8; Thanksgiving, 2Nov21.

ON-TIME PERFORMANCE DATA: 1Jan10.

PEOPLE: Brock Adams, 1Dec3; William Coleman, 1Apr3; Mary Head, speech, 2Jul14; Paul Reistrup, 1Apr3, speeches--2Jul8, 2Sep12, 2Oct8, 2Oct14; Edward Ullman, obituary, 1Apr4.

RE-ROUTINGS: JW Riley, 1Apr3.

RIDERSHIP DATA: 1Feb6, 2Jun10, 1Oct7, 2Dec9.

ROUTES, FUTURE: Inland Route, 1Dec10; Peoria 1Jun8; San Francisco-Monterey, 2Mar3; Seattle-Salt Lake, 1Mar3, 2Aug5, 1Sep3; Washington-Denver, 1Jan12.

SCHEDULE CHANGES: 2Feb12; spring 1Apr6; summer 2Apr3; fall 2Aug3, 4; winter 1Oct11; spring '77 1Dec9.

SPECIAL TRAINS: American Eagle Spec., 2Apr 14; Peanut Special, 2Nov3; RI Bicentennial Rocket, 1Jun13; Skyland Special, 2Jun20.

STATIONS: Cleveland, 1Oct14; Palatka, 1Jun10; Richmond CA, 1Dec8.

STEAM TRAINS: Freedom Train, 2Feb18, 1Dec 7; Vermont Bicentennial, 1Oct17; Virginia & Truckee, 1Sep11.

SURVEYS: 1st Class Service, 1Apr9; Train ratings, 1Jan4, 1Aug4; Reader Comments, 1Jan6, 1Feb9, 1Aug6, 2Aug10, 1Sep5, 2Sep4, 2Nov6.

TRAIN-OF-THE-YEAR, 2Dec12.

TRAIN-RIDE NARRATIVES: Adirondack, 2Jun8; Amfleet, 2Mar4, 1Jul4, 1Aug12, 2Oct7; Auto-Train, 2Jan5; Broadway Ltd, 2Jun9; Caltrak San Diegan, 1Sep12, 2Sep9; Canadian, 1Mar5; Canadian trains, Eastern, 2Feb5; Champion, 2Jun6; Coast Starlight, 2Feb9, 2Jun5, 1Oct15, 1Dec5; Colonial, 1Jul8; El Camino, 2Nov9; Empire Builder, 2Jun5, 1Oct8; Floridian, 2Jun5; Lake Shore Ltd, 2Mar14, 2Jun9; Las Vegas Ltd, 1Aug8, 2Aug14, 1Sep8; Montrealer, 2Jun8; Mt. Rainier, 2Jun5; National Ltd, 2Mar13; Palmetto, 1Jul9; Panama Ltd, 2Jun 10; JW Riley, 2Feb19, 1Jul10; SF Zephyr, 2Mar14, 2Jul7, 1Oct11, 2Dec15; San Joaquin, 2Mar13, 2Oct7; Silver Meteor, 2Jun6; Silver Star, 2Jun6; Southern Crescent, 2Jun7; Southwest Ltd, 1Mar12, 2Mar13; Sunset Ltd, 2Jun12, 2Dec5; Turboliner, 1Oct8; Yankee Clipper, 2Jun8.

TURBOLINERS, EMPIRE SERVICE: 2Aug4, 2Sep7, 1Oct8.

USA RAIL PASS: 1Feb6, 2Mar3, Riding 2Jun5, 1Aug3.

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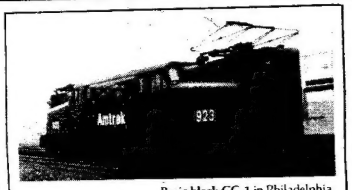

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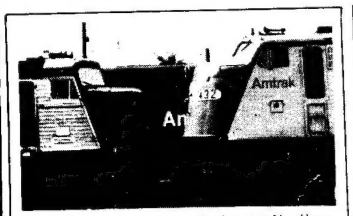

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